

APPLAUDING THE RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE ILLINOIS STATE LEGISLATURE REGARDING THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today in strong support of the recent actions taken by the Illinois state legislature regarding the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a proposed amendment to the Constitution which would unequivocally guarantee equal gender rights under the law. As many of my colleagues are certainly aware, the Illinois State Assembly recently voted on and passed the ERA, clearing the way for their counterparts in the Senate to consider this crucial legislation at the conclusion of their current recess. If Illinois' State Senate agrees to ratify the ERA, then only two more state ratifications will be necessary for this long overdue amendment to be added to our Constitution.

Some people have argued that the addition of an ERA amendment to the Constitution would simply be a change in semantics and nothing more. I strongly disagree. Presently, on average, women receive only 76 percent of the pay that men receive for comparable full time positions. Inequities such as these are inexcusable; they are disastrously damaging not just to women, but also to their families. Through the ratification of an Equal Rights Amendment, women would have an expanded legal basis to call for equal compensation for equal work.

Although the Equal Rights Amendment may have faded from the public spotlight at times, the movement to include women in the Constitution never died, and it is growing vigorously once again. Women had to wait until 1920 to be granted the right to vote under the Constitution. While this was certainly a monumental development, it has not produced full gender equality. The 14th Amendment, granting "equal protection of the laws," did not, and still does not, fully protect women from damaging gender discrimination. Only an Equal Rights Amendment would ensure the Constitutionally guaranteed full equality that women deserve.

The ERA was originally passed by Congress in 1972, along with a seven-year time limit for ratification. In 1979, Congress extended the time limit for three more years, leaving the deadline at 1982. Within a decade of the initial 1972 passage, the amendment had been ratified by 35 states, three short of the necessary 38. For many years after that, the ERA was, for technical reasons, generally considered "dead." However, legal analyses indicate that with just three more state ratifications, the ERA may in fact meet the requirements to be added to the Constitution. As has been verified by several legal experts, the fact that the time limit appears in the proposing clause rather than the text of the legislation leaves this deadline open to adjustment. When Congress chose to extend the deadline in 1979, a precedent was set; subsequent sessions of Congress may adjust time limits placed in proposing clauses by their predecessors. These adjustments may include extensions of time, reductions, or elimination of the deadline altogether.

It is therefore possible for current or future sessions of Congress to eliminate the deadline originally placed on ratification of the ERA, thus allowing the amendment to be added to the Constitution once it is ratified by three more states. This "three state strategy" is a very real possibility, and I have introduced legislation into the House of Representatives, H. Res. 38, to ensure that action will be immediately considered by Congress once three more state legislatures ratify the ERA.

Put simply, it is time for the Constitution to be amended to include an amendment which ensures gender equality for all Americans. Today, unlike some times in the past, the American people are decidedly ready for Constitutionally-guaranteed equal rights for men and women. A July 2001 nationwide survey by Opinion Research Corporation showed that 96 percent of American adults believe that male and female citizens of the U.S. should have equal rights, and 88 percent believe that our Constitution should explicitly guarantee those rights. Having the ERA in the Constitution will simply recognize what the American people already want—equal justice under the law.

Many leaders both here in Congress and in state legislatures are advocating for the "three state strategy," as well as a renewal of the ERA by Congress through a second passage of the amendment. I feel that anyone who is serious about guaranteeing equal rights to women should be supportive of both of these approaches. It does not matter how the ERA is eventually made part of the Constitution, as long as guaranteed gender equality rights are the end result.

As the Equal Rights Amendment reads, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." The ERA is unfinished business for the Constitution. It will be achieved, and present and future generations of women—and men—will thank us for it, and wonder why it took so long. It is simple justice, it is long overdue, and it is time.

INTRODUCTION OF FOCUS ON COMMITTED AND UNDERPAID STAFF FOR CHILDREN'S SAKE ACT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues Mr. PLATTS, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. SOLIS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. KILDEE, and Mr. SANDERS in introducing the FOCUS Act. This legislation would be an important step in increasing child care quality for all children.

High-quality child care can play an important role in healthy child development and school-readiness. Just as it is the parents who matters at home, it is the teachers who matter in child care. One of the most critical components of quality child care is a stable and qualified teaching staff. Children learning from more highly educated teachers perform better on tests of verbal and math achievement. Yet, child care staff—who have the responsibility of helping guide children's develop-

ment—are among the lowest paid workers in America. In 2000, the average hourly wage for a child care provider was \$8.16, which is approximately \$16,980 annually. Moreover, most providers do not receive health insurance or paid leave and the annual turnover rate is about 30 percent. Academic and government studies conclude that low pay is one of the leading causes of poor quality child care. Low wages keeps qualified providers from remaining in the field and deters new providers from entering the field. A 2001 report by the Center for Child Care Workforce and the University of California Berkeley found that centers are losing qualified staff because of low wages and are forced to hire less qualified replacements. The study also found that not only are wages extremely low, but they are not keeping pace with cost of living increases. States report centers are closing or turning away children because they cannot properly staff their programs.

FOCUS directly addresses the problems low pay creates by providing stipends to qualified child care staff based on the level of education. This legislation would be a mechanism to assist States increase the pay of child care workers and to improve the overall quality of child care. The bill would supplement wages by a minimum of \$1000 per year for providers with child development associate credentials and a minimum of \$3000 per year for providers with B.A.'s in the area of child development. These stipends will help attract new qualified workers to the field and increase the retention and skill level of current workers. FOCUS also would provide funds for scholarships so that we can continue to increase the qualifications of the child care workforce.

Research on early childhood and brain development clearly demonstrates that the experiences children have early in life have a decisive, long-lasting impact on their later development and learning. We cannot expect children to transition to kindergarten and succeed in school if we do not take the necessary steps to provide quality care in the years prior to school entry. The average quality of child care is far poorer than what it should be in a country as wealthy and committed to our children's future as is ours. It is time we work to make quality child care for all children a national priority. Mr. Speaker, I urge Members of the House to join me and co-sponsor the Focus Act.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES ACT OF 2003

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I am most pleased to introduce the Native American Languages Act Amendments of 2003, with Representatives NEIL ABERCROMBIE and DON YOUNG as original cosponsors.

This vital legislation will authorize the Secretary of Education to provide grants to or enter into contracts with Native American language educational organizations, Native American language colleges, Indian tribal governments, organizations that demonstrate the potential to become Native American language educational organizations, or consortia of such

entities, to establish Native American language "nests" for students under the age of 7 and their families. It will also authorize grants for these entities to operate, expand, and increase the number of Native American language survival schools throughout the country for Native American children and Native American language-speaking children. Finally, the bill will authorize the establishment of three demonstration projects that will provide assistance to Native American language survival schools and Native American language nests.

Today's measure is a companion to S. 575, which was introduced by the senior member of Hawaii's delegation, Senator DANIEL INOUE, and is cosponsored by Senators DANIEL AKAKA, BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, and TOM DASCHLE. A hearing was held by the Senate Indian Affairs Committee on May 15, 2003, at which there was broad-based support from native language speakers, educators, and supporters from across the country, including Hawaii, Alaska, California, New Mexico, Montana, Oklahoma, Minnesota, and Virginia.

This proposal forwards current federal self-determination policies toward native peoples, which support the promotion of economic and social self-sufficiency, as well as the preservation and revitalization of native culture, languages, art, history, religion, and values. Since language is a significant factor in the perpetuation of native cultures, the federal government enacted the Native American Languages Act of 1990 urging federal support for Native American languages, and the Native American Languages Act Amendments of 1992 establishing a grant program at the Administration for Native Americans to fund the preservation of Native American languages. My bill continues this commitment by our federal government to ensure the survival of these unique cultures and languages.

In my home state, I am proud that the people of Hawaii and the State of Hawaii have strongly supported the revitalization of Hawaiian culture, art, and language. In 1978, for example, the State of Hawaii wrote into its constitution a specific declaration that Hawaiian is one of our two official languages, along with English.

There is also support for Hawaiian language programs in both our public and private schools. At the forefront of these efforts have been supporters of Aha Punana Leo, a Hawaiian language immersion program which has endeavored to include both students and parents in an exciting and innovative way to revitalize Hawaiian language and culture. Ms. Namaka Rawlins, Director of Aha Punana Leo, and her husband, Dr. William (Pila) Wilson, have been pivotal in these efforts. The lessons of family and community involvement in the preservation of the Hawaiian language that they and other have proven are and can be used by other native communities and cultures across the country.

While the Aha Punana Leo program initially started with pre-school students, Hawaiian language survival schools were also established to allow for students to graduate from high school. Over 2,000 students are currently enrolled in Hawaiian language nests and survival schools. A Hawaiian language center—Hale Kuamoo—was eventually established at the University of Hawaii at Hilo with the collaboration of Aha Punana Leo as well as a Native College—Ka Haka Ula O Keelikolani College. Both programs have been crucial in providing

training to teachers in Hawaiian language, college courses in Hawaiian, and graduate education in Hawaiian language and culture.

The revitalization of the Hawaiian language in my state has been instrumental in the preservation of Hawaiian culture, which is important to all of us who call Hawaii home. Today's legislation will take this lesson nationwide in continuing the commitment made by the federal government in 1990 and the progress that has been made since that time to preserve Native American languages, including the Hawaiian language.

TRIBUTE TO COACH LOU GIANI

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Coach Lou Giani of Huntington High School on his induction into the U.S. National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Coach Giani is among the most successful wrestling coaches in New York State history, having compiled 388 victories in 34 seasons. This past season Coach Giani and his Huntington High School team won the New York State team title—a remarkable eighth title for Coach Giani. In addition to the team accolades, Huntington High School also had three individual wrestlers win State Championships, increasing the career total of Coach Giani to a record 22 individual state champions. In recognition of these accomplishments, the National Wrestling Coaches Association bestowed on him the honor of "Coach of the Year".

In addition to his service to Huntington High School and New York State, Coach Giani has served as an international ambassador for wrestling. Having organized cultural exchange programs in both the Soviet Union and Poland, he has provided disadvantaged youth with the opportunity to learn wrestling from one of the sport's best coaches.

Beyond his service as a coach and international teacher, Mr. Giani had an equally impressive career as a wrestler. Having not begun to wrestle until his junior year of high school, Mr. Giani went on to win ten New York Athletic Club titles, a gold medal at the 1959 Pan American Games and was given the honor of representing the United States on the 1960 Olympic Freestyle team.

I commend Coach Lou Giani for his dedication to the sport as well as his service to the students of Huntington High School and I congratulate him on his induction into the U.S. National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

HEALTH DISPARITIES AMONG MINORITIES

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to discuss the state of Health Care in America. Mr. Speaker, we have a health care crisis in America and in particular, we have a

crisis in the African-American community with regard to disparities in treatment and access to care.

Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus has made Universal Health Care the centerpiece of our agenda. The Congressional Black Caucus believes that everyone in America should have some basic level of health care coverage.

Mr. Speaker, today, as in the past, being Black in America is a medically dangerous condition. Being Black and poor can be deadly. That is a national tragedy that the Congressional Black Caucus is determined to end.

In 1998, President Clinton committed this Nation to eliminating racially based health disparities by the year 2010. As a result of this initiative, in the report entitled "Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care" issued March 2002, the IOM research team concludes that: Americans of color tend to receive lower-quality health care than do Caucasians and that African-Americans receive inferior medical care—compared to the majority population—even when the patients' incomes and insurance plans are the same. These disparities contribute to higher death rates from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and other life-endangering conditions.

The Report found that African-American Medicare patients were almost 4 times less likely than their Caucasian counterparts to receive needed coronary bypass surgery.

Black seniors were nearly 2 times less likely to receive treatment for prostate cancer.

Older Black Americans were 3.6 times more likely to have lower limbs amputated as a result of diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, access to health care is becoming a critical issue for Black and Hispanic-Americans.

Overall, more than 40 percent of nonelderly African-Americans (12.5 million) and more than 50 percent of nonelderly Hispanic-Americans (18.5 million) had no health insurance in 2001–2002.

Minority children face obstacles in getting the health care they need. In 2001, there were 9.2 million uninsured children, the majority of them were minorities: 36 percent were Hispanic and 18 percent were Black.

Four-and-a-half million Black children now receive their health coverage through Medicaid or SCHIP (the Federal health program for children), and 4.7 million Hispanic children get healthcare through Medicaid or SCHIP.

That is why Medicaid, which provides health care coverage to low-income Americans, is critical to minorities.

The most recent data show that 9.8 million Blacks and 6.4 million Hispanics need Medicaid to get access to health care.

Mr. Speaker, despite these disparities the Bush budget continues to shortchange healthcare. To pay for the tax cuts for the wealthiest 5 percent, the Republican leadership under-funds numerous health programs including the Ryan White program, eliminates the Community Access Program, cuts the Veterans Health programs and the SCHIP program.

Despite these disparities the Republicans cut funding for Medicaid coverage for children, low-income seniors, people in nursing homes, and the disabled. And the Bush administration wants to block grant Medicaid—cut the funding by \$3.2 billion over 10 years and give the